



Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Pinedale Region

April 2018 Newsletter



Sage Grouse Strut

It's that thrilling time of year when sage grouse are gathering to perform their annual spring mating ritual on area strutting grounds, called leks. Leks are often located in open areas within the sage where the males can be better seen and heard by females.

The dramatic display makes viewing sage grouse a popular activity in April and even into May across much of Wyoming. The Wyoming Game and Fish Department recently updated its lek viewing guide to help birders find accessible leks around the state and minimize viewing disturbance to the grouse. The [Game and Fish Sage](#)

[Grouse Lek Viewing Guide](#) and associated maps can be viewed or downloaded from the Game & Fish website.

Several Pinedale Game & Fish personnel are currently getting out early to count the number of birds on leks in the region to keep tabs population trends. Each fall, hunters deposit wings from harvested birds in "wing barrels" for biologists to analyze and determine a chick:hen ratio. In 2017, the statewide data showed a ratio of 1.2 chicks per hen, which was slightly better than 2016, but still below the 1.5 chicks per hen managers like to see for a stable to increasing population. So, after a couple of strong years, managers are expecting numbers to be somewhat depressed again this year.





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Mule Deer Getting Much Needed Help

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) will hold a public information sharing meeting to discuss progress of the Wyoming Range Mule Deer Habitat Project over the last four years and discuss future treatment plans. The public meeting will be held **Monday, May 7, at the LaBarge Town Hall from 5:00-7:00 pm**. The meeting will include habitat biologists and fire managers from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and WGFD, engaging in an open house-style format with a brief presentation to occur at 5:30 pm.

The purpose of the meeting is to provide an opportunity for citizens to learn about what has been accomplished by the BLM and WGFD in the first four years of treatments with an update on a variety of habitat treatments planned for this coming summer and beyond.

Since 2014, over 11,600 acres of sagebrush have been enhanced, 2,900 acres of aspen have been mechanically treated, 900 acres of aspen have been prescribed burned and over 12,000 acres of cheatgrass have been treated. In 2018, plans include an additional 850 acres of aspen prescribed burns, 1,400 acres of sagebrush enhancements, 300 acres of aspen mechanical treatments and widespread cheatgrass management.



Since 2010, WGFD has worked collaboratively with the public to develop the Wyoming Range Mule Deer Initiative. Implementing habitat enhancements on public land was a significant component of the plan, which was developed with extensive public input to guide management of the Wyoming Range mule deer herd.





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Shed Hunting

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department reminds antler hunters there is a season in place which prohibits the gathering of horns or shed antlers from January 1 through April 30 on public lands west of the Continental Divide in Wyoming. This regulation has been in effect since 2009 and includes all state-owned lands as well as federal lands. While regional game wardens are reporting generally good compliance with the shed antler regulation this year, there are currently active cases in both the Pinedale and Jackson regions.

In addition, many big game winter ranges in both Teton and Sublette counties have further restrictions to either human presence or motor vehicles during the winter months. However, the shed antler regulation does apply to all other federal or public lands not covered under such winter range closures. Similarly, Wildlife Habitat Management Areas (WHMAs) managed by the Wyoming Game and Fish Department in the Jackson and Pinedale Regions are closed to human presence December 1 through April 30. For more information on Game & Fish WHMAs, you may visit the website at: <http://wgfd.wyo.gov/accessto/whmas.asp>



There is also a Wyoming law that requires anyone who finds a dead antlered or horned big game animal with the antlers or horns naturally attached to the skull or skull plate, including hunting cripple losses, road kills, and natural mortalities, to make arrangements to procure an Interstate Game Tag (IGT) from Game and Fish. The \$8.00 IGT needs to be procured before moving any antlers or horns from the location where they were found and is to show the animal was legally obtained.

According to the Wyoming Game and Fish Commission regulation, “collection” is defined as: to search for, locate, stockpile, or possess shed antlers and horns of big game animals on public land or attempt to search for, locate, stockpile, or possess shed antlers and horns of big game animals on public land.

With a continued increase in popularity for shed antler hunting, and a corresponding increase in public complaints of violations, Wyoming Game and Fish wardens are stepping up enforcement efforts to make sure everyone is playing by the rules. Each winter, the Wyoming Game and Fish Department brings in additional game wardens from across the state to increase the enforcement presence on key winter ranges, both to deter the poaching of big game during early winter and to enforce the antler hunting regulation after animals have shed their antlers.

The purpose of the seasonal closure is to minimize harassment or disturbance of big game animals on their winter and

spring ranges when animals are most vulnerable to stress and displacement to less productive habitats. It is especially important that these animals not have to endure any unnecessary stress at this most critical time.





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From the Front Desk...

With the weather transitioning from winter to spring, Pinedale Game and Fish office manager Lori Johnson reminds boaters that all watercraft powered by any type of motor are required to have a registration number. Non-motorized craft do not require state registration, but must display a current Wyoming Aquatic Invasive Species decal. Also, by state Statute, all boats brought into Wyoming between March 1 and November 30, MUST be inspected for aquatic invasive species PRIOR to launching on Wyoming waters.

Watercraft owners can renew their registration online at the Game & Fish website: <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Fishing-and-Boating/Boating-and-Watercraft> or at any G&F office. New watercraft registrations can be obtained from any Game & Fish office or with an application to the Watercraft Section at the G&F Cheyenne Headquarters. Applicants are required to provide a current title, Proof of Wyoming Sales Tax paid, and the license fee. Watercraft may be registered for a one-year at \$40.00 or a three-year period for \$110.00.

All watercraft registrations expire at the end of the calendar year and fees are not transferable or refundable if the watercraft is sold.



Watercraft owners are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the **Wyoming Watercraft Regulations** available on the Game & Fish website at <https://wgfd.wyo.gov/Regulations#Watercraft-Regulation> or at any G&F office or license vendor. Additional information can be found at the Game & Fish website or by calling the Cheyenne Office at: 1-800-842-1934 and asking for the Watercraft Section.



“Do you know what you’d do if you found yourself face to face with a bear or mountain lion?”

If not, you should attend the...

“Staying Safe in Large Carnivore Country”

Seminar

When: Wednesday, April 25, 2018, 5:30 – 7:30 PM

Where: Marbleton Town Hall

Cost: FREE!

For more information please call the Jackson Game and Fish office at 733-2321 or 800-423-4113.